



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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June 9, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **EGGLESTON FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW – A
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Eggleston Foster Family Agency (Eggleston or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provider.

Background

DCFS contracts with Eggleston, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

Eggleston is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. The Agency oversees a total of 32 certified foster homes in which 57 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Eggleston's headquarters is located in the Second District.

DCFS pays Eggleston a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Foster Care Rates Bureau. Based on the child's age, Eggleston receives between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, the Agency pays the foster parents between \$624 and \$790 per month, per child. DCFS paid Eggleston approximately \$1,037,000 during Fiscal Year 2007-08.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of our review was to determine whether Eggleston was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed the Agency's staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed the children and foster parents.

Results of Review

The foster parents stated that the services they received from Eggleston generally met their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. However, Eggleston did not always comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. For example:

- The patio of one of the four homes visited had numerous boxes and old furniture stacked up against the backyard's patio walls. In addition, the garage in the home was filled with discarded items and old furniture. The cluttered patio and garage posed a potential safety hazard to the two children living in the home. Prior to the conclusion of our review, CDSS Community Care Licensing inspected the home and also concluded that the clutter in the patio and the garage needed to be removed. Prior to the issuance of this report, the Agency provided documentation that the patio and garage had been cleaned and the clutter removed.
- Two of the four homes visited did not adequately secure detergents and cleaning solutions.
- One of the four homes reviewed was not conducting disaster drills with the children every six months as required by CDSS Title 22 regulations.
- Two of the four homes reviewed were not assessed by Eggleston to determine the foster parents' ability to effectively care for more than two children prior to placing more than two children in the home.
- Five of the nine case files reviewed did not contain documentation that Eggleston social workers visited the children weekly during their first three months of placement as the County contract requires. During this period, 27 required visits were not documented for these five children.
- Seven of the nine case files reviewed did not contain documentation that the children or the children's DCFS social workers were informed during orientation about the Agency's house rules, children's rights policy, discipline practices, grievance/complaint procedures, and discharge procedures.

- Of the nine Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) reviewed:
 - None contained goals that were specific, measurable and time limited.
 - Three did not indicate the reason the child was in placement.
 - Three were not updated timely. The three NSPs were updated on average three months late.
 - Seven did not contain documentation that the children and their foster parents were offered the opportunity to participate in the development of the NSPs.
 - Seven were not approved by the children's DCFS social workers.
- Two of the nine Quarterly Reports reviewed were not prepared timely. The two Quarterly Reports were prepared 65 days late.
- The foster parents did not maintain daily medication logs for two children taking psychotropic medication.
- One of Eggleston's social workers did not meet the educational requirements of the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. The social worker did not possess a qualifying Master's Degree for a social worker position.

Review of Report

On October 7, 2008, we discussed our report with Eggleston who agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Eggleston's management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. DCFS will follow up with the Agency to ensure the recommendations are implemented.

We thank Eggleston for their cooperation and assistance during this review. If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:DC:AA

Attachment

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Ruby Brown, Chairperson, Board of Directors, Eggleston FFA
Karen Dixon, Programs Director, Eggleston FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
EGGLESTON FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2007-08**

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether the Eggleston Foster Family Agency (Eggleston or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We visited four of the 32 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Eggleston billed to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in October and November 2007 and interviewed five foster parents and six of the thirteen children placed in the four homes. We also reviewed the case files for five foster parents and nine children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

Eggleston needs to ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Eggleston also needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) and Quarterly Reports are prepared timely and contain all the required information. In addition, Eggleston needs to ensure that Agency social workers visit the children the required number of times. We specifically noted the following:

Foster Home Visitation

- One (25%) of the four homes visited was not maintained in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. For example, the patio of the home had numerous boxes and old furniture stacked up against the backyard's patio walls. In addition, the garage in the home was filled with discarded items and old furniture. The cluttered patio and garage posed a potential safety hazard for the two children living in the home. Prior to the conclusion of our review, CDSS Community Care Licensing inspected the home and also concluded that the clutter in the patio and the garage needed to be removed. Prior to the issuance of this report, the Agency provided documentation that the patio and garage had been cleaned and the clutter was removed.
- Two (50%) of the four foster homes visited did not adequately secure detergents and cleaning solutions. Prior to the issuance of this report, the Agency provided

documentation that both foster homes purchased and installed cabinet locks to secure the detergents and cleaning solutions.

- One (25%) of the four homes visited was not conducting disaster drills with the children every six months as required by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Foster Parent Certification

- Two (50%) of the four foster homes were not assessed by Eggleston to determine the foster parents' ability to effectively care for more than two children prior to placing more than two children in the home.
- One (20%) of the five foster parent's files reviewed did not contain CPR and First Aid certificates. Prior to the conclusion of our review, the foster parent obtained current CPR and First Aid certificates.

Children's Case Files

- Five (55%) of the nine case files reviewed did not contain documentation that Eggleston social workers visited the children weekly during their first three months of placement as the County contract requires. During this period, 27 required visits were not documented for these five children.
- Three (33%) of the nine children's required home visits were not made within the timeframes required by the County contract. The County contract requires Agency social workers to visit the children twice a month, approximately 14 days apart after the child has been placed in the home over three months. We noted three instances where the visits were 30 days apart.
- Seven (77%) of the nine case files reviewed did not contain documentation that the children or the children's DCFS social worker were informed during orientation about the Agency's house rules, children's rights policy, discipline practices, grievance/complaint procedures, and discharge procedures.

Needs and Services Plans

- None of the nine NSPs reviewed contained goals that were specific, measurable, and time limited. In addition, three (33%) of the nine NSPs did not indicate the reason the children were in placement.
- Three (33%) of the nine NSPs reviewed were not updated timely. The three NSPs were updated on average three months late.
- Seven (77%) of the nine NSPs reviewed did not contain documentation that the children and their foster parents were offered the opportunity to participate in the development of the NSPs.

- Seven (77%) of the nine NSPs were not approved by the children's DCFS social worker as required.

Quarterly Reports

- Two (22%) of the nine Quarterly Reports reviewed were not prepared timely. The two Quarterly Reports were prepared 65 days late.
- Five (55%) of the nine Quarterly Reports reviewed were not dated or signed by Eggleston's social worker. Therefore, we could not determine if they were prepared timely.

Medical Services

- The foster parents did not maintain daily medication logs for two children taking psychotropic medication.

Recommendations

Eggleston management ensure:

1. **Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**
2. **Foster homes are maintained in accordance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**
3. **Foster parents adequately secure detergents, cleaning solutions, and other items that could pose a potential safety hazard to children.**
4. **Foster parents conduct disaster drills with the children upon placement and every six months thereafter.**
5. **Foster home assessments are completed for homes where more than two children are placed.**
6. **Foster parent certification files contain copies of current CPR and First Aid certificates.**
7. **The Agency's social workers visit the children weekly during the first three months of placement and twice a month, approximately 14 days apart, after the first three months of placement by the Agency's social workers.**
8. **Children's orientation about the Agency is comprehensive and includes all of the information the County contract requires.**

9. NSPs contain goals that are specific, measurable, time limited, and indicate the reason the children are in placement.
10. NSPs are updated within the required timeframes and contain documentation that the children and foster parents were offered the opportunity to participate in the development of the NSPs.
11. NSPs are approved by the children's DCFS social workers.
12. Quarterly Reports are prepared timely, are dated, and contain the signature of the Agency's social worker.
13. Foster parents maintain daily medication logs for all prescription and non-prescription medications administered to the children.

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

Determine whether the program participants received the services that Eggleston billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed six children placed in four Eggleston certified foster homes and four foster parents to confirm the services Eggleston billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster children interviewed stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from the Agency generally met their expectations.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether Eggleston social workers' caseloads do not exceed fifteen placements and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed Eggleston's administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.

Results

Eggleston's supervising social worker supervised five social workers and the Agency's five social workers carried an average caseload of ten cases.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**Objective**

Determine whether Eggleston staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification


We interviewed Eggleston's administrator and supervising social worker and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

Eggleston's administrator and supervising social worker possessed the education and work experience required by CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff working on the County contract. However, one of Eggleston's social workers did not meet the educational requirements of the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. The social worker did not possess a qualifying Master's Degree for a social worker position.

Recommendation

14. **Eggleston management ensure that staff working on the County contract possess the education required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

	EGGLESTON FAMILY SERVICES <i>A FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY</i>	
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	License #197804353	License #197804012

October 14, 2008

To: Supervisor, Yvonne Burke
Supervisor, Gloria Molina
Supervisor, Zev Yarslovsky
Supervisor, Don Knade
Supervisor, Michael Antonovich

From: Karen Dixon, FFA Director
Michael Graham, Executive Director

RE: Contract Review Audit in March 2008 of Eggleston Family Services Foster
Family Agency

Dear Supervisors:

Eggleston Family Services would like to acknowledge the Audit Controller's office for its review of our program and on-going support in meeting the needs of children in out of home care.

The following statements indicate the corrective action plans which are addressing the findings and recommendations of the contract review audit conducted in March 2008. The corrective action plans were immediately implemented by the agency and documentation was provided to the Auditor Controller on March 24, 2008.

Eggleston FFA response to the recommendations outlined in the audit report includes:

1. **Audit Recommendation:**

Staff adequately monitors foster homes to ensure they comply with the county contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Eggleston's CAP:

A retraining was held with staff to review the procedures to ensure foster home compliance. This included the use of existing tools such as the monthly home visit reports and monthly paperwork requirements which monitors Title 22 health areas. Staffs were refreshed on contract requirements and level of expectation of how the foster homes should be maintained and assist foster families in maintaining home files and in meeting agency and state regulations.

2. **Audit Recommendation:**

"Foster Homes are maintained in accordance with the county contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations"

Eggleston's CAP:

Eggleston's conducted several trainings with the foster parents on the agency expectations and responsibilities of foster parents. Eggleston's Social Workers conducts monthly home inspections to identify deficiencies quickly and annual recertification home inspections are completed by our quality assurance staff to ensure that the foster home remains in compliance with all regulations.

3. **Audit Recommendation:**

Foster parents adequately secure detergents, cleaning solutions, and other items that could pose a potential hazard to children.

Eggleston's CAP:

The families involved were retrained on the proper storage of potential hazardous items. The FFA SW'r is also monitoring their compliance monthly and documenting on the home visit report.

4. **Audit Recommendation:**

"Foster parents conduct disaster drills with the children upon placement and every six months thereafter."

Eggleston's CAP:

All Staff and foster parents were retrained on the disaster drill protocols and the drill dates are being tracked by the quality assurance staff to flag the FFA SW'r when a home has not met the six month requirement. The home visit report form also was updated to include a date for the disaster drill including last one held and next one due. Eggleston's will utilize this self-monitoring tool as well as encourage foster parents to put drill dates on their home calendars.

5. **Audit Recommendation:**

"Foster home assessments are completed for homes where more than two children are placed."

Eggleston's CAP:

Eggleston FFA has an assessment form which identifies the specified criteria in accordance with the county contract. All placements are reviewed with the Supervisor or Director and must meet the guidelines set forth in the county contract before approved.

6. **Audit Recommendations:**

"Foster parent certification files contain copies of current CPR and First Aide certification."

Eggleston's CAP:

Eggleston FFA has a tracking system which is updated monthly to insure compliance to required documents being current. The agency has identified resources to get certifications updated more quickly and has also informed foster parents that families who are not in compliance will jeopardize future placements in the home.

7. Audit Recommendation:

"Children are visited weekly during the first three months of placement and twice a month approximately 14 days apart after the first three months of placement by the agencies social workers."

Eggleston's CAP:

Eggleston FFA retrained staff on the required visits by social workers with placed children and documentation of weekly face to face contacts during the first three (3) months of placement and twice a month thereafter as long as the child is stable in the home. Eggleston FFA also updated the case activity log to indicate weekly or bi-monthly contacts. All case activity logs are checked by our quality assurance staff for dates so that each month will have the required visits. Documentation is the agency's record of our services to each child. Each social worker providing direct services to children and foster families will maintain current case documentation for each child and foster family. The case activity log should be a well thought out plan for what will be accomplished each week/bi-monthly. The content will vary from child to child and family to family and will be guided by the Needs and Services Plan and what is needed by the child and family at that time.

8. Audit Recommendations:

"Children's orientation to the agency is comprehensive and includes all of the information required by the county contract."

Eggleston's CAP:

Eggleston FFA provides an orientation to all youth at intake and/or during the first day(s) of placement. The staff was retrained on what the orientation entails, who was responsible for completing the orientation and the signatures required. A check list is used to insure that the orientation is completed. The quality assurance staff will check paperwork for completion.

9. Audit Recommendations:

"Needs and Service Plans contain goals that are specific, measurable, time limited and indicate the reason the children are in placement."

Eggleston's CAP:

The agency conducted several trainings on report writing which provides direction in determining in which areas a child needs assistance and how best to proceed in these areas. Specifically the training targeted developing an understanding of how to identify a goal that is measurable and specific to a child's needs particular emphasis was placed on involving the child, foster parent

and CSW in the development of goals and what each person's role was in helping the child reach successful outcomes.

The agency protocol was also reviewed with staff to documents at least three attempts (a wee apart) to obtain the signature from the DCFS social worker before contacting the DCFS supervisor for assistance if there is no response by the DCFS social worker.

All reports are also faxed to the county social worker and fax transmittals reports are attached to reports for confirmation. This protocol will be closely monitored by the FFA supervisor and quality assurance staff for follow-up when needed. Signed reports were submitted to Auditor in March.

10. Audit Recommendations:

"Needs and Service Plans are updated within the required time frames and contain documentation that children and foster parents were offered the opportunity to participate in the development of the Needs and Service Plans."

Eggleston's CAP:

The agency has retrained staff on the process of involving the child, foster parent and CSW in developing recommendations for placement goals. The case activity log is also updated to check-off that a discussion was held with foster parent and child. This information will be part of our tracking system to assure that protocols are being followed. Reports that required signatures were submitted to the Auditor in March 2008.

11. Auditor Recommendation:

"Needs and Service Plans are approved by the children's DCFS social workers."

Eggleston CAP:

A checklist has been developed that identifies each stage of the signing and approval process. This tracking system is signed off by the supervisor who will make sure the report is transmitted to DCFS social worker for approval as mentioned previously at least three attempts (a week apart) will be made to obtain the DCFS social worker's signature before contacting the DCFS supervisor for assistance.

12. Audit Recommendations:

"Quarterly reports are prepared timely, are dated, and contain the signature of the agency social worker."

Eggleston's CAP:

Staff were retrained on the quality standards for quarterly reports. Emphasis was placed on summarizing the overall progress of the child in more specific terms and recommendations for what the child needs to work on during the next quarter. A tracking system is utilized to monitor the dates of reports and are reviewed in case management meetings by the supervisor and updated monthly in staff meetings

13. Audit Recommendations:

"Foster parents maintain daily medication logs for all prescription and non-prescription medications administered to the children."

Eggleston's CAP:

Foster parents and staff were retrained on the maintenance of medication logs and the protocols on what to do when a minor refuses medication. A tracking system is in place that requires that documentation is completed on each child whether they receive medication or not. Staff is also required to document on child's case activity log whether a child is on medication. The agency maintains a separate binder on children taking psychotropic meds and authorization dates are tracked by both our quality assurance and mental health staff.

14. Audit Recommendation:

"Eggleston management ensure that staff working on the county contract possess the education required by the county contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations."

Eggleston CAP:

The agency will continue to conduct hiring practices and clearances according to Title 22 standards. Our human resource department has a screening process that checks all degrees and accredited schools to confirm education, work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and on-going training.

As a result of the audit our agency has improved its delivery of services to children and families and will continue to review our practices to improve quality of care.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Karen Dixon, M.S.
FFA Director

Cc:

Wendy L. Watanabe, Acting Auditor-Controller
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director DCFS
Audit Committee
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing